Application No.: 09/835046

Docket No.: SCW-003RCE

REMARKS

Claim Rejection Pursuant to 35 U.S.C §103(a)

Claims 1, 3-14, 16-17 and 19-20 were rejected by the Examiner in the Office Action of August 12, 2003 as being unpatentable for obviousness over Cannon et al (U.S. Patent No. 6, 678, 824, hereafter "Cannon") in view of Richter et al (United States Patent No. 6,615, 020, hereafter "Richter"). For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Summary of Claimed Invention

The claimed invention provides a mechanism for the granting of professional continuing education credits in exchange for review of educational content without resorting to conventional testing requirements. Educational data is segmented into educational units forming substantially complete content and is presented as a series of self-contained topics to a user. The user must log in to begin review and log out upon completion. The time period between login and logout is recorded. A minimum and maximum time parameter in which a user is to review the content in exchange for continuing educational credits is provided. The parameters combined with the smaller topics to require the user to actually be present at a remote terminal in order to compile substantial continuing educational credits. The minimum time parameter prevents a user from logging in and then immediately logging out in order to gain credit. The maximum time parameter prevents a user from logging in and wandering off to do something else when the user is supposed to be reviewing the content since exceeding the time parameter disqualifies the user from gaining continuing education credits. Conventionally a test from the continuing education authority or on its behalf had been required in order to ensure review of the material. The present invention avoids the need for a test on the educational content by requiring applicants review the data in smaller segments that satisfy the time parameters.

Summary of Cannon et al

Cannon discusses an application usage time limiter that monitors pre-configured applications. The usage time limiter runs as a front-end for the programs selected for monitoring or else runs as a separate program interacting with the operating system to limit the usage of

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specified programs. The invention in Cannon is directed towards allocating time for a user so that in order to execute a specified program, the user must first spend a specified amount of time operating a second program. Cannon discusses the situation where the amount of time a user is permitted to play computer games is limited by the amount of time the user has spent using educational programs. Cannon further discusses the situation where a user is given a credit enabling the user to play a non-beneficial program in exchange for spending a certain minimum amount of time executing an educational program.

Summary of Richter et al

Richter discusses a computer-based instructional system for teaching a student at a remote location. The system provides ongoing verification of the student's continuing presence at the remote location. The student may receive credit towards a degree or certificate and the school system offering the instruction may receive "at seat" credit for funding.

Argument

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the telephone interview on July 21, 2005.

The combination of Cannon in view of Richter fails to disclose all of the elements of Applicants' independent claims as amended. The new reference (Richter) cited by the Examiner in the Office Action of July 1, 2005 discusses a system which requires ongoing monitoring of the student's presence during the course of the remote educational session. The ongoing monitoring takes place either through continuous monitoring processes employing a camera or through periodic interruptions of the student during the educational session so that the student can confirm their continued presence and reaffirm their identity (see col. 3 and 4, the independent claims and abstract, etc.). This requirement for ongoing monitoring is fundamentally different from Applicants claimed invention.

Applicants have amended their independent claims as set forth above so as to clarify that Applicants claimed invention does not utilize ongoing monitoring but rather identifies a starting time for the educational session and an ending time. The period of time between the

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starting time and the ending time is the elapsed time of the educational session and the elapsed time is compared to a minimum and maximum time parameter to see if the educational session engaged in by the user meets the professional continuing education requirements of a professional accrediting authority. The claimed invention thus represents a non-intrusive and lightweight mechanism for verifying the user's presence during the educational session which doesn't require either continual monitoring or interruption of the user as described in Richter. The identification of the starting and ending time to determine an elapsed time and the basing of the conferral or non-conferral of continuing educational credit on a comparison of the elapsed time to a minimum and maximum time parameter are not taught or suggested by the combination of Cannon in view of Richter. Accordingly, Applicants request the withdrawal of all of the outstanding rejections.

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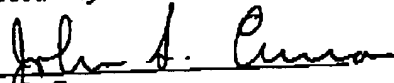Application No.: 09/835046   Docket No.: SCW-003RCE

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicants believe no fee is due with this statement. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. SCW-003RCE from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: July 26, 2005   Respectfully submitted,

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